

The title of this proposed rule change, “Restoring Internet Freedom,” is so ironic I have to wonder just how cynical Ajit Pai must be. Whose freedom is being restored, exactly? We, the consumers, currently have freedom to access whatever sites we want on the internet without interference from our service providers. That will come to an end if the FCC Open Internet Rules (net neutrality rules) are abolished.

The Open Internet Rules are extremely important to me. I urge you most strongly to protect them—no, I demand it. Like most Americans, I have only one choice for true high speed Internet access: the cable company, Comcast. I’ve tried DSL and it’s pointless. We don’t get good cell signal here, so that’s out. Not that it would really make much of a difference, since there’s no such thing as a ‘local’ cell company.

Cable companies (and wireless carriers) are actively lobbying Congress and the FCC for the power to:

- * Block sites and apps, to charge them “access fees,” which will no doubt increase at double digits every year, much like subscription fees
- * Slow certain sites and apps to a crawl, to establish paid “fast lanes” (normal speed) and “slow lanes” (artificially low speeds)
- * Impose arbitrarily low data caps, so they can charge sites to escape those caps, or privilege their own services (“zero rating”)—this in particular is highly anticompetitive. NBC/Comcast I’m sure would love nothing more than to make me unable to watch CBS programming, or Hulu/Netflix/Amazon originals.

These companies are lobbying so they can use their monopoly power to stand between me and the sites I want to access, extorting money from us both. I’ll be forced to pay more to access the sites I want—internet alone is \$75/mo. already!—and sites will have to pay a kind of bribe to every major cable company or wireless carrier, just to continue working properly! This will of course result in higher subscription costs. (What’s more likely, of course, is that they’ll pay some carriers but not others, or they’ll come to agreements with the biggest carriers, leaving certain customers with access that others lack. Much like the battle between Comcast and the Yes Network that took place last year.)

The FCC’s Open Internet Rules are the only thing standing in their way. Don’t interfere with my ability to access what I want on the Internet, or with websites’ ability to reach me. You should leave the existing rules in place, and enforce them. My freedom, and the freedom of other consumers—citizens—is far more important than the “freedom” of colossal companies to screw over their customers.

Look at it this way—it’s all fun and games as long as Big Internet is trying to keep people from visiting progressive websites, alternative news like Al Jazeera, etc. But what if—and it could happen—some company decides to limit access to Fox News or the 700 Club? Then suddenly it will be all about the Right of the Consumer—except, too late.

In short—don’t sell out citizens’ right to access information for only somewhat extravagant rates instead of extortional rates. The American people support Net Neutrality, and therefore so should you.